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TAGS: [AORC](#) [KNNP](#) [ENRG](#) [TRGY](#) [KU](#) [BA](#) [SA](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: CIVIL NUCLEAR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE GULF

REF: A. 09 KUWAIT 647
[1](#)B. 09 MANAMA 647
[1](#)C. 09 RIYADH 1393
[1](#)D. 09 MUSCAT 575

[1](#)1. (U) This is an ACTION REQUEST: Please see para 3.

[1](#)2. (SBU) In February 2008, an Ambassadorial-level U.S. delegation including Jackie Wolcott, the former Special Envoy for Nuclear Nonproliferation, visited Saudi Arabia and Bahrain to discuss potential areas of cooperation aimed at the development of infrastructure for civil nuclear power. In June 2008, a similar Wolcott-led delegation visited Kuwait for discussions. In September 2008, Ambassador Wolcott met with an Omani delegation during the IAEA General Conference. In March and May 2008, the U.S. concluded Memoranda of Understanding on the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy with Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, respectively. Due to the change in Administration, and due to indications that plans for civil nuclear power in these countries have recently evolved (reftels), Department recommends renewed civil nuclear consultations at the expert-level.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Department requests that Posts contact appropriate officials in host governments to explain that the United States supports the responsible development of civil nuclear power and has taken note of host governments' interest. Department further requests that Posts provide a brief overview, drawing from the below key themes, of the types of technical cooperation that could be available to help host governments develop civil nuclear infrastructure. If raised, Post can explain that the vast majority of the technical cooperation described below can take place without conclusion of a 123 Agreement for civil nuclear cooperation. (A 123 agreement is required for the transfer of U.S. nuclear materials, reactors, or major reactor components, but not for information or personnel exchanges.) Finally, Posts are requested to inquire into host governments' interest in a detailed briefing on such cooperation by U.S. experts travelling to the region. (Note: Nuclear experts from the USG are planning a visit to Cairo, tentatively scheduled for January 2010. End Note.)

BEGIN KEY THEMES:

-- In his April Prague speech, President Obama stated that "we must harness the power of nuclear energy on behalf of our efforts to combat climate change, and to advance peace and opportunity for all people."

-- Since nuclear power is the only proven source of low-carbon, baseload electricity, the United States believes that it will be an important element to the world's energy mix in the coming decades.

-- On the other hand, nuclear power is accompanied by a unique set of safety and security concerns. Similarly, the production of nuclear fuel poses risks in terms of nuclear weapons proliferation.

-- Therefore, we strongly encourage all civil nuclear users to develop the robust infrastructure needed to meet the highest global standards of safety, security, and nonproliferation.

-- Last year, a U.S. delegation led by our former Special Envoy Jackie Wolcott consulted with representatives from (host country) to provide a high-level overview of U.S. civil nuclear cooperation. (FOR MANAMA: Following this visit, we concluded a Memorandum of Understanding on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in March 2008, opening the door to deeper civil nuclear cooperation. FOR RIYADH: Following this visit, we concluded a Memorandum of Understanding on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in May 2008, opening the door to deeper civil nuclear cooperation.)

-- During this consultation, Ambassador Wolcott explained that several agencies of the United States Government can offer, subject to the availability of resources and commensurate with need, a broad range of technical cooperation aimed at the development of human resources and other civil nuclear infrastructure.

-- The Department of State (DOS) coordinates civil nuclear cooperation policy; leads the negotiation of civil nuclear cooperation agreements; supports the implementation of international nuclear conventions on nuclear safety, security, safeguards, and liability; and contributes to infrastructure development through programs at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

-- The Department of Energy (DOE) collaborates with other countries through bilateral and multilateral cooperation approaches to support the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy. The Infrastructure Development Working Group of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership provides useful information sharing to participant countries in the areas of human resource development, small and medium sized reactors, infrastructure readiness assessments, and radioactive waste management.

-- The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) of the Department of Energy collaborates with partners on topics such as legal and regulatory issues related to international safeguards, safeguards training and equipment, intermediate- and low-level waste management, environmental monitoring, emergency management, research reactor operations, health physics, and radiation protection.

-- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) can provide legal and technical advice in the areas of nuclear-related legislation and regulations, nuclear safety and security, nuclear reactor and facility licensing, design certification, operations, maintenance, and decommissioning.

-- The Department of Commerce (DOC) works closely with U.S. industry to facilitate cooperation efforts with civil nuclear consultants, engineering firms, reactor vendors, and fuel service providers. Recent nuclear-sector efforts have included trade missions for U.S. nuclear industry to states with emerging and expanding nuclear energy programs.

-- A team of civil nuclear experts from the United States is planning a visit to the region in early 2010, and would be interested in meeting with appropriate (host government) officials to discuss these opportunities in greater detail.

-- (IF RAISED): Note that the vast majority of the technical cooperation just described can take place without a 123 Agreement for civil nuclear cooperation. A 123 Agreement is required for the transfer of U.S. nuclear materials, reactors, or major reactor components, but not for information or personnel exchanges.

-- (IF INTEREST IN A 123 AGREEMENT IS EXPRESSED): We will report your interest in a 123 Agreement back to Washington for appropriate consideration.

END KEY THEMES.

¶4. (U) Department thanks Posts for their assistance in this matter. Department points of contact for civil nuclear cooperation in the Middle East are Marc Humphrey (ISN/NESS) and Ariel Stukalin (ISN/RA).
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